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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3994  
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3352  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3559  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 000060

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA  
ALSO FOR IO A/S HOOK, PDAS WARLICK  
P FOR DRUSSELL AND RRANGASWAMY  
USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/GERMAIN/SCHEDLBAUER  
NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/YERGER/MCDERMOTT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [UNSC](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [SY](#) [LE](#)  
SUBJECT: LEBANON: GOL RESPONDS CALMLY BUT FIRMLY TO SECOND  
ROCKET ATTACK

REF: A. BEIRUT 0053  
[B](#). BEIRUT 0028  
[C](#). BEIRUT 0025

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. William K. Grant for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

Summary  
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[1](#). (C) On the morning of January 14, unknown persons in the Arqub region in south Lebanon launched rockets towards Israel, after which there was artillery fire from Israel to the suspected launch area. This is the second rocket attack from Lebanon into Israel in one week. The second attack produced no casualties in Lebanon or, reportedly, in Israel. GOL Minister of Information Tareq Mitri, speaking on behalf of the government, condemned the attacks. They harm the "national unity as well as the Lebanese consensus," he stressed. He cautioned that the attacks do not serve the Lebanese national interest, the Palestinians' interests, or the Arabs' interests. UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), working jointly in patrolling the suspected launch areas, continue on a heightened state of alertness. The LAF issued a formal statement on the January 14 attack, asserting its commitment to UNSCR 1701 and to preventing anyone from destabilizing the area by using south Lebanon as a platform to send messages that only serve the "Israeli enemy."

[2](#). (C) No organization claimed responsibility for the most recent attack or the earlier January 8 rocket attack. Many observers are pointing fingers at the Syria-based Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). President Sleiman met with another Palestinian group to seek support for disarming Palestinian groups outside the Lebanese camps. Contacts continue to question whether either the January 8 or 14 attacks could have occurred without Hizballah's knowledge. End summary.

LAF IS RESOLUTE TO SUPPORTING  
UNSCR 1701  
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[3](#). (C) Early on January 14, rockets were fired from the Arqub region in south Lebanon at Israel, after which the artillery fire, presumably from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), was directed at the suspected launch area. Press and LAF sources

tell us there were at least three rockets fired. LAF and UNIFIL contacts confirmed a counter battery artillery response of four rounds were fired from Israel into southern Lebanon, in the northeast section of the UNIFIL area of responsibility near Al Hibbariya and Hasbaya. The rocket attack and the Israeli response were very similar to the exchange that occurred January 8 at location approximately 60kms to the west (reftel). Minister of Information Tareq Mitri, speaking on behalf of the government, said "What happened in the south is condemned and harms the national unity as well as the Lebanese consensus." He cautioned that the attacks do not serve the Lebanese national interest, the Palestinians' interests, or the Arabs' interest. He stressed that the perpetrators of the attacks are "targeting the consensus (in Lebanon)." The LAF issued a formal statement stressing its commitment to UNSCR 1701 and to preventing anyone from destabilizing the area by using south Lebanon as a platform to send messages that only serve the "Israeli enemy." As with the January 8 attack, no group took responsibility for the attack.

MAYBE WE DID, MAYBE WE DIDN'T  
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14. (C) The earlier, January 8 launch of two 122mm rockets from Tayr Harfa in southern Lebanon has not yet been formally attributed to any persons or group. Many of our Lebanese contacts speculate that the PFLP-GC could be the culprit. The Damascus based spokesman for the PFLP-GC, Anwar Raja, hinted at the group's involvement in an interview with Al-Jazeera January 8. PFLP-GC has three known military camps

BEIRUT 00000060 002 OF 002

in Lebanon, two near the Syrian border, and one in the Chouf.

Its leader, Ahmed Jibril, a former officer in the Syrian Army and a long-time proponent for the destruction of Israel, made a January 3 call for new fronts to be opened up against Israel if it expanded its war in Gaza. PFLP-GC made no statements after the January 14 attacks; since the January 8 comments by Raja, there have been no other announcements by the PFLP-GC.

SLEIMAN CALLS FOR PALESTINIANS  
TO DISARM OUTSIDE CAMPS  
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15. (C) After the first rocket attack into Israel, President Sleiman, on January 12, met with a delegation from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), a group loosely related to the PFLP-GC which professes less violent and more political oriented action to achieve Palestinian goals. Sleiman told the press that Palestinians will live in better conditions if they assist in disarming Palestinian groups based outside the country's refugee camps. Also commenting in the press, the leader of the DFLP, Nayef Hawatmeh, said his party and the vast majority of Palestinians opposed using south Lebanon as a base to launch attacks on Israel.

COMMENT  
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16. (C) As was the case on January 8, the GOL response to this attack was helpful. The government condemned the attack from Lebanese soil and stressed that it does not seek conflict with Israel. This second attack shows that UNIFIL and LAF probably cannot exercise control over the UNIFIL AOR to prevent other attacks, given the size of the territory and difficult terrain. Contacts continue to question whether this attack or the earlier one could have occurred without Hizballah's knowledge. End Comment  
GRANT